

Hunger Gains

Understanding Unmet Urges

August 11, 2024

Today we're exploring **God's intentions for our appetites!** Cuz even though we *are* defined by our *desires*, they *rarely* get *fulfilled*; making it real easy to feel *fed up* with *down here*. And as *agonizing* as that is, it's a huge step *toward salvation!* Cuz every *solution* starts by admitting our *problem*, and *most* of our problems stem from *this* question: **What are you hungry for? Be honest...**



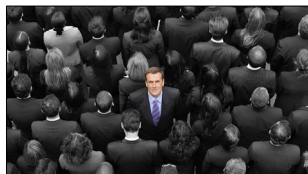
You hungry for more *money*, more *meaning*, a better *body*, a bigger *house*, *people's approval*, or just *personal space*? Cuz **there's something you desire that you don't have** – and *that's* called being *hungry*.



And because we're all *unfulfilled*, we *all* live in a world *full* of *frustration*, *irritation*, *desperation*, and *exasperation!* In fact, this is where we agree with *Buddhists*: **all our suffering stems from our unmet desires.** So, before you spend thousands of dollars on *marriage counseling* or *family therapy* – trying to figure out the *source* of all your *stress*, let me let you in on a big *existential secret*: **you're not you when you're hungry!** That's right, all those Snickers commercials are equal parts *advertisement* and public service announcement for *mental health!*



Cuz like we discussed last week, **trying to live as anyone other than the real you is a recipe for disaster** cuz you run the risk playing the *twonk*. And our only *guarantee* of living life to the *fullest* comes from fully *following* the *Author* of our *adventure*; regardless of how hard the path appears. Cuz only He can lead us to play our part to its full potential. And our *Author* tells us **who we're meant to be is tied to where we're meant to be;**

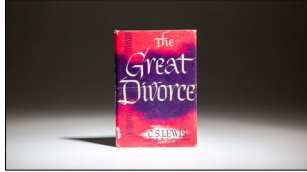


For while we are in this tent [our earthly dwelling], we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be *unclothed* but to be *clothed* instead with our heavenly dwelling. Now the *One* who has fashioned us for *this* very purpose *is God*, who has given us the *Spirit* as a *deposit*, [like a taste] guaranteeing what is to come. – 2 Corinthians 5:4 NIV



That's *it!* We're **hungry for home!** And being *homesick* hurts much more than any *other* ache cuz it affects *every* other *feeling* we can *feel!*

And *that's* because our whole *standard* of *comfort* comes from *home!* **Home is the base we use to appraise everything else.** Which is why the most heartfelt *compliment* we can give to *any* experience is, **"It made me feel at home."** And similarly, *that* standard is why our *discomfort* is determined by *differences* from *home* – and the most alienating *criticism* we can give to *any* experience is, **"It felt foreign or unnatural."** And that doesn't mean it's all *bad*, it just means *it* can't completely *satisfy* cuz *we* don't completely *fit*. Only the real *home* of the real *you* can offer that.



It's like going on vacation. Even though it may be *exciting* and *inspiring*, it still feels *foreign*. There's different *food* in different *environments*, there may be different *customs* and even a different *language*. And at the end of the day you get into a different *bed* and the sleep just *isn't* as good. So, what do we *do*? We try to *make it home*! Some of us bring a specific *blanket* or *pillow*, while others pack their favorite *snacks*; some of us need our *white noise* machine and some of us, like my kids, bring *7 pairs of shoes* to foster that familiar feeling. But whether it's *converting currency* or *downloading Google translate* – out of instinct, **we adjust our environment to make it feel like home.** because **the real you is only satisfied by your real home!**

And **since the real you belongs up there – down here just won't cut the mustard.** Try as we *might*, we *can't* quite adjust *this* environment to make it feel like *home*. And *that's* when we're presented with our *other* instinctual option; *go native*. That's when **we adjust ourselves to make our environment feel like home.** Problem is, only *mortals* are at home in this *mortal world*, so for this to *work*, we have to *suppress* our *supernatural* identity and try to *ignore* our urges for *more* than this.

And I've never *seen* the situation more clearly than the picture C.S. Lewis paints in **The Great Divorce.** Cuz in it, he follows a character from "the *grey town*", a type of Hell where everything is *ghostly* and *not quite real*, to "the *high country*", a type of Heaven where everything has *true* substance. And although the *grey town* is *perpetually twilight* and *rainy*, the inhabitants stay put because they have the ability to *think things into existence*. So they *continually* build new homes *further* from their problems in *hopes* of finally being *fulfilled*. But no matter how hard they try to adjust *themselves* or their *environment*, all the *empty efforts* just push them further from the high country – until the *millions* of miles they've *moved* make it impossible to even consider changing their ways. And *then*, **all that's left is an eternity of trying to deny our desire for something better.**

So *don't do that!* Just like Lewis' picture of *Hell* – there's *already* billions of people *here* who can all *confirm*: **Snickers doesn't satisfy!** Because **this whole place doesn't satisfy!** And no matter how hard we try to change *ourselves* or *situation*, **the real you will always hunger for your real home.**

[So] Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to [God], and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. – Isaiah 55:2 NIV

[I mean look around] We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the *present* time. Not only so, but *we ourselves*, who *have* the firstfruits of the Spirit, as the taste of the good to come, we *groan inwardly* as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the *redemption* of our [real] bodies. – Romans 8:22-23 NIV

So try to *see it* that way – we're "**waiting eagerly.**" **Hunger focuses on what we're missing now,** but **waiting eagerly focuses on what we're gaining later.** And if we can get that *perspective* straight, we can see the *purpose* in the plan more *clearly*. So, why *would* a loving God put us in an unsatisfying world?! Good question. Good thing the Good Book always leads us to a good answer!

For *everything* that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the *Scriptures* and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. – Romans 15:4 NIV

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. – 1 Corinthians 10:11 NIV

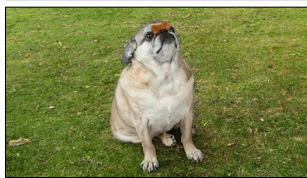
Back at the beginning, God picked some *people* out of the *crowd* to teach the whole *world* with an *object lesson* – and *since* then, we’ve seen the Jews *obey, obstruct, hunger, feed, fail, and succeed* while at *home and away*. And although *every* experience *can* teach us *something*, God’s *Word* makes it *clear* how constantly **being homeless and hungry serves a very important purpose:**



Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or *not* you would keep *His* commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and *then* feeding you with manna, [but just enough to keep you hungry] ... to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every *word* that comes from the mouth of the LORD. – Deuteronomy 8:2-3 NIV



Get the picture? **Hunger isn’t meant to make us testy, it’s meant to make us tested!** Our *real* home requires all residents to be *reliant* and *compliant*! So *this* place both *teaches* and *tests* that kind of faith!



In all this you greatly *rejoice*, though *now* for a *little while* you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith ... may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ...for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. – 1 Peter 1:6-9 NIV



For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ [taking us home]. – 1 Thessalonians 5:9 NIV

And yet, it’s all too easy to *confuse* the two! So **how do you see the hunger in your life?** Are you *“suffering wrath”* or *“receiving salvation”*? Are you being *tortured* or being *tested*? Well, how have you handled *your taste*? When you get a moment of *satisfaction*, do you think, *this* is what you’re *missing now* – or what you’re *gaining later*? If you’ve got that *“gaining later”* mindset, *this* is how you should feel. You can *endure* the discomfort of the world cuz you trust the *encouragement* of Scripture to *“wait eagerly”* for what you *want*. Meanwhile, if a taste of the good life focuses your hunger on what you’re *“missing now”* – you’ll feel more like *this*:

[But that is the process:] Like newborn *babies*, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you *have* tasted that the Lord *is good*. – 1 Peter 2:2-3 NIV

Taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who *trusts* in Him! – Psalms 34:8 NKJ

Remember, **hunger isn’t torture, it’s a tool!** It guides us to *grow up* and *gain* the *perspective* we *need* – to see who *we will be* when we’re *truly satisfied*. And it tests our *current* levels of **patience, integrity, humility, and love** to see if our appetite is aimed at the *real you*. *Here’s how*:

1. **Hunger tests our patience.** Because the *real* you *doesn't* make choices using *snap judgements*, it exercises patient pondering in all of its decisions. But **Hunger makes us hasty.** And you're not you when you're *rash*, so aim at *steadfast!*

Be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming *is* near. – James 5:8 NIV

2. **Hunger tests our integrity.** Cuz the *real* you desires what is *just* instead of *justifying* what it *desires*. But **Hunger makes us settle.** And you're not you when you're *compromised*, so aim at *confident!*

Whoever walks in integrity walks *securely*, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out. – Proverbs 10:9 NIV

3. **Hunger tests our humility.** Because the *real* you is concerned by the needs of *others* more than its *own*. But **Hunger makes us greedy.** And you're not you when you're *selfish*, so aim at *servant!*

[God] has shown you, O mortal, *what is good*. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. – Micah 6:8 NIV

4. **Hunger tests our love.** Because the *real* you sees all of creation as a God-given advantage to be *appreciated*, not just *obstacles* from an *adversary*. But **Hunger makes us hostile.** And you're not you when you're *hateful*, so aim at *thankful!*

The eyes of the LORD are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unflinching love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. – Psalms 33:18-19 NIV

And things change when we see *that's* His love: keeping us alive *in famine!* Not *ending* all famines!



In His plan, hunger *helps* us *gauge* and *grow* the *reliance* and *compliance* we were lacking, so this *unsatisfying* world *feels like famine*. Meaning, **it's the ultimate test of obedience v indulgence.** And that battle *needs* to be our *top* priority, cuz **indulgence is our fatal flaw**, but **obedience is our saving grace.** And hunger *leads* us to develop the *obedience* to get the *real us* to our *real home* for the *real comfort* that really *satisfies*. So

Blessed is the one who *perseveres under trial* because, having *stood the test*, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him. – James 1:12 NIV

But this *is not* because *God* is such an *egomaniac* that He demands everyone else love Him; it's because *we are!* And He knows, giving us what our *earthly* appetites *want* would only work against the hunger we *should have* for our *real home!* **He's helping us get our eyes off ourselves!**

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ... your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. – Matthew 6:31-33 NIV

Look, **we're all starving for something** but everything down here *ain't real* – and you're *not* you when you're *full of fake*. So hold out and stay hungry so you can follow your gut to your *real* home!

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.